Sweet Revenge... Served Hot?: Penelope's Anger, Carmen's Bold Theft, Lara's Shock, and Sam's Concern

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Sweet Revenge... Served Hot?: Penelope's Anger, Carmen's Bold Theft, Lara's Shock, and Sam's Concern

by lefemmerouge

Summary

It's been several months since a White woman named Mila tried to selfishly remake the world in her image. She was murdered by literal gods from "the heavens" after she tried to take their powers. Since then, Lara has continued to distance herself from her father's legacy by turning the Croft family mansion into public housing and working with museums, archives, and libraries to carefully, and respectfully, return their stolen artifacts. Zip and Sam have happily helped her fulfill this new life mission. There's one crinkle in her plan. Something she'd never expect coming. Her close childhood friend, a Black girl she hung out with at boarding school, is alive. Penelope Stone, who she knew as "Penny," is plotting to take her down. She hopes to show the world that they could never trust this "reformed" adventurer and archaeologist. A muscular trans woman and an acclaimed international thief, known for her iconic red trenchcoat, agree to aide her in this desire for revenge...

Notes

I began this fic on Dec. 19th after watching the recent season of Tomb Raider: The Legend of Lara Croft. I saw that no one had done a fic with Penelope Stone, so I decided to write my own. As I said on the small Lara Croft tumblr community (it has less than 10 users), "[I] found out what the name of that lady is in the last episode...Her name is Penelope Stone...I wish they had made a season with her, as I could tell that she'd be one badass villain. Maybe one day someone will write a fic with her…The fandom page...says that she has amber eyes, black hair with highlights, and is voiced by Toks Olagundoye [and calls her a]…minor antagonist...[who was] an old school mate of Lara Croft's...Penelope hates Lara for some unrevealed reason. Penelope was approached by Fig who she knew from earlier, she had even warned Fig that Mila will fail." In a public post on my Tumblr blog, I also responded to headcanons that Fig is trans (which I go with in this fic), adding: "there's so few posts about Penelope Stone...although when she said that she would "fail" I immediately thought she'd try to get with Lara somehow, to distract her by flirting with her or something. I could be 100% wrong....it's a crime that no one has done a fic with her before...I...want to write a fic with her, just for fun. Carmen Sandiego might even be with that one, we'll see. In any case, Mila was terrible and she really did deserve to die. Fig was just a footsoldier...That Fig Jr. guy definitely died." This fic is based off that sort-of promise to write this fic. I also rewatched the scene with Penelope at the end of the final episode of season 2, which I used at the beginning of this fic. Since so little about her character is known, I made up her motivations and backstory. I hope more people write fics with her. My other fic, which brings Lara, Carmen, and Julia Argent together is an inspiration. This fic is not a continuation from that one.

In this fic, the name Ahmed al-Adani comes from the current Egyptian minister of Tourism and Antiquities (who has a Wikipedia page by the way), Ahmed Issa, and the minister before him,

Khaled al-Anani. I also pulled in information from the "Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities," "Rosetta," and "Supreme Council of Antiquities" Wikipedia pages. The Supreme Council of Antiquities is currently part of Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, at least since 2022. Furthermore, it seems that there is tangential evidence that Lara has smoked in some iterations, so I added that into this fic. In addition, the jacket that Penelope wears is linked in the text. It is called "Long Nehru Jacket in Emerald Green." It is loosely based on a green Nehru jacket I once wore to a high school dance years ago (I still have it in my closet!). I had such a bad time at that dance that I eventually left, when a fire alarm went off. I used that as an excuse to sneak out a door and walk back home. That isn't something you should do, I guess, but I always *hated* those damn high school dances.

An early title of this fic was "Carmen's 'New Girl,' Penelope's Revenge, and Lara's Confusion." Others were "Carmen's Bold Theft, Lara's Utter Confusion, Penelope's Sweet Revenge, and Sam's Worry" and "Sweet Revenge... Served Hot?: Penelope, Fig, Carmen, Lara, Sam, and Stealing the Rosetta Stone." While I liked the latter two, I changed it to the current one, as I felt it was more accurate. Comments and constructive criticism are welcome and appreciated.

This fic was cross-posted on Squidge World, Quotev, and Wattpad.

Update: Thanks to everyone for reading! This fic is apt because a recent article on Hyperallergic criticized long-term loans by the British Museum to former colonies, saying they are "not restitution" and "do not acknowledge historical wrongdoing, nor do they restore agency to source communities." Lara would agree, making this fic topical.

Update on 3/17/26: Fanart has been added to this fic with permission of the artist, Lena, showing Lara and Sam kissing.

Update on 4/28/26: An updated version of this fic has been posted on Squidge World, adding romantic scenes and making Player genderfluid. Some of those changes were added here.

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by Crofting a Way Forward?: Lara, Artifact Theft, and the Red Woman by lefemmerouge2
- Inspired by Everything you ever wanted to know about the Rosetta Stone by British Museum
- Inspired by Egyptian sculpture gallery by British Museum
- Inspired by British Museum announces completion of Independent Review by British Museum
- Inspired by British Museum Map by British Museum
- Inspired by British Museum Partly Shutters After Security Breach by Ex-Employee by Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists
- Inspired by British Museum hit by alleged IT attack by ex-worker by BBC

Penelope was angry. Lara had been her friend during school when she had long braids. Lara had been so nice and so kind to her. Then, she had to get with Sam, that damn Korean-American girl. She knew that Lara had denied the relationship rumors, but she had done her own investigation. She knew they were *true*. She didn't mind that Lara had repatriated her artifacts and essentially stripped herself of the rights to be the heiress of the Croft family. She had even changed her former family mansion into public housing with the help of the local government. What made her angry was Lara had forgotten about *her*. In reality, she'd lost touch with her, after all that had happened. In fact, she thought that Penelope was gone for good. She'd *tried* searching for her, but never found her *anywhere*, and gave up. She assumed that Penelope, who'd previously been known as Penny, had somehow been killed.

Penelope would make Lara pay for "forgetting" about her, for not even trying to rekindle their friendship. She'd grown more furious and bitter over the years. She had met Fig at her secret desert headquarters. She looked into her grey eyes, saying she knew how to "handle" Lara. Fig didn't know what this woman meant. As a fierce fighter with her own motivations, she didn't want to be toyed with *again*. Even so, she followed Penelope's every word. After all, she had *accurately* predicted that Mila would fail. In fact, Penelope *was* toying with her. She used her feminine wiles, and looks, including her beautiful and striking brown skin, to make sure that this muscled woman would be on her side.

It had been several months since then. She opened her phone and clicked on a contact she had named "Cute Argentinian." It began ringing. The woman on the other side had heard from her *a lot* in recent months. She still wasn't entirely sure that Penelope could be trusted. Even so, her intel had been accurate *so far.* VILE was struggling. She pushed down her worries about Penelope for now. "I have a job for you, Miss Sandiego," Penelope said firmly, and directly. She breathed in deeply, "I'd like you to steal the Rosetta Stone." Carmen wasn't sure she heard it right. She'd like her to steal one of the most guarded, most precious artifacts in the world? Why? She knew it should be back in Egypt... but…

Her doubts were dispelled in a second after Penelope snickered. She spoke softly, her words tinged with seduction. She had become an expert at this. "Don't tell me you aren't gonna do it. Don't tell me you are too good for it? A bona fide *bella donna* like yourself, with such lush maroon hair, sparkling eyes, and red lipstick, can do anything, *right*?" What she said caught Carmen off guard. She couldn't see the woman directly, but her light brown face was warm and flushed. She happened to accidentally turn on her camera at that moment. Penelope could see how embarrassed she was. She quickly turned off her camera. It was too late. The woman knew she had won against this international master thief.

"Uh, thanks for saying that," she began, trying to hold in her reactions. "You are right, Miss...I'll get right on it." She then asked the main question: "where would you like me to put the...uh...artifact...after I've...stolen it?" Penelope grinned. She knew exactly where. She'd be hailed as a hero. Lara would be outmatched. She'd use it to put her *former friend* on notice, to show her that this wasn't a game. This was real life. "At the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Cairo of course." What she knew, but hadn't been publicly revealed, was that the British Museum had *already* begun the slow process of repatriation, thanks to help from Lara's new foundation, the Croft Center for History and Culture. She guessed that not even Carmen's hacker friend had learned about that. She hoped to undercut Lara and possibly discredit her.

Carmen responded quickly, "it will be done, Miss. I promise you." Penelope was glad. Everything was falling in place. As she saw it, Carmen had fallen victim to her manipulation. "Good. Keep me posted." She clicked the end call button and placed her phone in her pocket. Fig had been sitting there the entire time. She'd heard *the entire* conversation. She was a little annoyed. She huffed and pouted. She twirled some of her black hair, and her lighter blue highlights in the front, with her finger. She came close to her friend, or perhaps more than a friend, putting her hands on one of Penelope's blond hair highlights. "Did you *have* to talk to her that way...don't you care about me?...I'd wish…"

The woman laughed and shook her head. She couldn't believe this hot, muscular pale-skinned woman was acting this way toward her. She stroked the woman's chin, her amber eyes staring into the woman's grey eyes and her blue mascara, of a dark shade than her highlights. "Oh I do, my sweet. Don't be *jealous* now. I only wanted to get her to help m—us accomplish our goals to put that snake, Lara, in her place." She proceeded to smooch Fig on the cheek. In a bit of a daze, Fig nodded, staring adoringly at her, and relented. She had her own reasons for detesting that *supposedly* former treasure hunter. And she was deeply in love with Penelope.

For all that Mila had done, she had paid for *all* of Fig's gender transition needs. Fig wanted to destroy the world so she could remake it all over again. Even so, she wasn't bigoted. She had only *fully* realized that she was trans after spending time with Penelope. She sort of knew, but this woman had given her even more resources and support than anything Mila had done. She didn't have a toxic relationship akin to what she had with Mila, who would say she enjoyed her "purchase" of her body. For all her faults, Penelope treated her well. She didn't mind that Fig had transitioned from a man to a woman, or that she had chosen her own name. Fig seemed more than capable. And she respected that.

"Thanks, P," she said, "I don't know how you knew she'd be into it though..." The woman shook her head. She rattled off something that surprised her. She used her developed intelligence network to learn anything she could about those people she aimed to exploit. There was nothing, and no one, she couldn't know intimate details about. She picked up her datapad and pressed a button. It soon displayed a hologram across the room.

"Let me tell you, my sweet, amazing, Fig, *how* I know. There's pictures of that *Carmen girl* and that Canadian professor, *Julia Argent* is her name, getting close." She then explained that one of Carmen's good friends was Ivy, that she had also been shown near a man named Gray, and that there were countless women she'd trained with at VILE Academy. She couldn't stop her explanations until she moved onto to her woman of interest. She displayed everything she had gathered, thanks to her skilled network of informants. "Now, that damn *Lara*, she doesn't even try to hide anything. She's been with that fucking woman, Sam Nishimura, despite publicly denying it for *some reason*. And I have on good authority that she teased her childhood friend, the daughter of the late Conrad Roth and an Interpol agent, Camilla Roth, by bathing fully naked when Camilla was in another room... she's been close to Eva Tong, of The Library's branch in Beijing as well." Fig was amazed at how much she knew. That's why she loved her so, that's why she trusted her. It was all coming together.

As for Carmen, she had no idea who Penelope was. Even so, her sense of justice and commitment to stealing artifacts from their wrongful owners drove her forward. "Player, what can you tell me about the Rosetta Stone? Can we take it?" He began to rattle off facts about it, noting it was uncovered by French soldiers in 1799, and that "finding" the stone was groundbreaking, unlocking all sorts of lost history, writings, and wisdom. He scratched his head. He didn't know how to tell her

this. "Red, this isn't gonna be easy. This slab of black granodiorite has high-tech security. No one has *even attempted* to take it before. It might be a trap to arrest you and throw you in the slammer."

She had expected that. But, this did not phase her. They had faced tough circumstances in the past. Team Red could pull through. She'd be asking all of them to do their part, although she'd be taking the biggest risk. She was ready. "Player, I appreciate the worry, but I can do this." Shortly after getting off a call with him, she took a red eye from San Francisco to London. The plan was simple. She would parachute down and land near the British Museum, where she'd snatch the artifact. They parked the plane in a secluded airfield, where a helicopter was waiting for them. It had been pre-arranged, thanks to one of their partners.

Ivy flew the copter. Her friend, Shadowsan with her too. He'd be nearby if something went wrong. Just in case, she had a special gun that could immobilize someone, with a certain gas, on her. Julia had given it to her as a present, with the approval of the Chief (of ACME), who she was on good terms with. She descended onto the museum and prepared to go in. Shadowsan did the same only moments later. He landed on the roof of the Winston House, the European Study Center of the University of North Carolina. No one saw him for *some reason*. Meanwhile, she made her way across the roof, jumping as she went, running as fast as she could, until she reached *a certain window*. It was the room which shined upon the gallery which contained this historic stone. Many videos she had watched online had shown this. Plus, one of her friends had cased out the museum and sent her photos, while looking like a normal tourist.

Before she cut through the window pane, Player tapped away on his keyboard. He had breached the museum's security systems. He pressed a key. All the security shut down, including all the cameras within the entire museum. It was totally dark. The museum had fired someone earlier that year for it. Even worse, someone had stolen thousands of artifacts for years. Despite that, the higher-ups claimed that their systems were up to snuff, even though the IT staff had warned them about issues. So, this time they brushed it off. They'd never admit it, but they *didn't care* if anything was stolen. It was the higher-ups that were to blame, *not them*. With this hole in security, Carmen was able to cut through the glass and make her way into the Egyptian sculpture gallery. She tiptoed carefully. She didn't see anyone. Out of nowhere, two flashlights shined on her.

Two women stepped out of the shadows. "Lara, you were right! *Someone* really does want to steal the stone," one woman said. She stood beside a muscular, brown-haired woman. They came in closer and prepared themselves. Carmen wouldn't stop with her mission. She moved her bountiful, wavy, and thick brown hair from side to side, and confidently strutted forward her slender, shapely, and curvy self. "You two can't stop me. I'm gonna return this to where it belongs: Egypt." Lara was incredulous. How could someone be saying this? Didn't she know already? Or did she not? "Uh, we are already in the process of that...can we *please* talk? You don't need to do this."

The woman in a red trenchcoat chuckled. She couldn't believe these women. Who were they after all? *Why* were they trying to stop her? She wasn't pleased to see them. "No, the time for talking and polite action is over. You can say what you want, miss, but I know this museum can't be trusted. They stole so many artifacts from Egypt. They want their damn grubby hands all over them. Why are you on their side?" She lunged toward the glass case. The two women raised their silver pistols at her. They spoke in unison. "Step *away* from the case, lady. We don't want to shoot." She turned her head from side to side. She was daring them to try. She placed certain headphones over her ears. She then emitted a high-pitched sound. It sent Lara and the other woman back, with glass shards flying everywhere. Somehow, Carmen was uninjured. She wrapped her hands around the stone, now that the glass case had been broken.

Lara was utterly horrified. Seeing her friend injured made her furious. Since she was delirious from the sound, which continued to assault her ears, she couldn't do much. She was a little disoriented even after Carmen turned off the device. She reached for her handgun, but Carmen saw her first. She unhooked her special ACME gun from her belt. She fired it right at Lara's face. It was a direct hit. A special gas released, covering her entire face. She quickly became sleepy and fell to the ground. Her vision became blurry. She tried to reach out and stop Carmen, but to no avail. The master thief kept walking toward the window, believing that no one could stop her.

The other woman, just as injured, inched her arm, with its an ivory skin tone and creamy tan color, shining under the moonlight, toward the woman. "I won't let you get away!" she exclaimed. She raised her gun, but another one of the lady thief's gadgets stopped her. As extendable fist came out of her sleeve, punching the woman's hand. She yowled in pain. The lady shook her head. "Just so you know, neither one of you ever stood a chance against me." She dragged the stone out of the room, somehow, struggling with its weight. It was so *damn heavy*! She spoke into her communicator. "Ivy, I'm ready for a pickup!" Her friend chirpily replied. "Got it, Carm!"

Carmen waited at the window, which she smashed apart with the force of her body. Glass shards fell below. She didn't have much time. She told Shadowsan that he better come quick, since she needed help immediately. He did what she asked. The sounds she'd made during the fight with the two women, whose faces she couldn't fully make out because the room's lights had been turned off, had alerted the guards. She had to get out of there. If she didn't, this would all be worthless. In the nick of time, just as she heard multiple footsteps approaching, the copter approached. Ivy came within inches of the window. Shadowsan had made it. Ivy had picked him up earlier. He held out his arm for Carmen and grabbed her. Thanks to some specially made set hooks, and pulleys, they started to rope in the stone. The guards raised their guns.

They didn't dare fire. They didn't want to risk damaging this four-foot-tall broken stela. It was a national, and international, treasure. All they could do was demand that Carmen and her friends stop. Their pleas were *completely ignored.* The artifact was safely taken aboard the copter. As the copter's door began to close, Zack threw a smoke bomb through the broken window and into the room. The guards coughed as smoke obscured the escape of Carmen and her friends.

As they flew into the air, they couldn't believe they had gotten away. It seemed almost unbelievable. Usually they were chased by *someone*. This time, no one even attempted to follow them. Once the copter had reached a safe distance from the museum, Player reactivated the security systems. Back inside the Egyptian sculpture gallery, the smoke finally cleared. The lights across the museum turned on. The guards saw the damage that had been wrought on the glass cases in the room, all of which had been smashed apart. Nothing else had been disturbed, except for one artifact: the stone. It was missing. This would be a clear disgrace for the museum, if... One of the women groaned.

"Lady Croft!" the guard cried out, "are you okay?" She put her thumb up. The guard still wanted her to receive medical attention. She didn't want that. She was afraid someone would try to attack her in the hospital. The other woman on the ground, groaning in agony, disagreed. "Miss Nishimura, are you…" he started to say. She interrupted him. "Care for her *first*. I can't let anything happen to her…*please* help her." She spoke into her comlink and directly connected with Zip. He was surprised to hear her voice. This was unusual. "Lara is hurt...someone...did this...someone…" she said. He was concerned. Even so, he knew that she could care for herself. She was capable of that.

Lara suddenly opened her eyes. She crawled over to Sam and wrapped her arms around her. She pleaded. "Sam, I don't need a doctor...all I need is *you*." She lovingly smooched her friend on the cheek, causing a blush to cover her friend's face. Her eyes closed then closed and she slumped onto the ground again. *What in the world had just happened?* And in front of all these people? She gently wrapped her hands around Lara. "Guys, I'll...uh...take it from here...just *please* don't tell *anyone* about this." The guards nodded. They knew how much Lady Croft valued her privacy. Sam somehow carried her out of the museum and out a back door, so that no one would see them. Luckily for her, it was National Girlfriend Day, which honored bonds between women, without any rules for *how* to celebrate. People had free rein to be as romantic as possible. Zip teased her. "Wow, LC really likes you...she doesn't smooch her other friends." Sam was annoyed. "Tease me *all you want*, but I'm taking her back to her hotel." He didn't say anything more, except adding, "okay. Well, keep me posted."

No one paid her any mind. She carried Lara down the streets like a princess. She walked with Lara in her arms until she reached the nearby fancy hotel where Lara was staying. She carried Lara to the elevator. A hotel staffer gave her a wink, something she didn't appreciate. She hated when people saw her this way. She took the elevator to the fifth floor, where Lara had been given a penthouse apartment for a reduced price, thanks to her generous contributions. She laid her down on the plush bed. She couldn't help but admire this ex-aristocratic *cute* tomb raider. She held back from kissing her friend's mouth. That would be improper, at least while she was resting. Instead, she gave her peck on the cheek.

To her embarrassment, Lara's eyes opened. "Sam, how'd I get here? And what were you doing...*just now*?" Sam started to back away. She prepared to defend her actions. She breathed deeply. She couldn't lie to her. She couldn't do that. Her friend had been through *so much*. "I...uh...carried you all the way from the British Museum after that woman attacked you and...well…" she stopped for a second, and they continued, "...I kissed you on the cheek since you did the same for me...just to thank you." This caused Lara to rub her eyes a little bit. She woke up a little more. What was her friend saying? Was she confessing to her? Maybe this was a dream? She could say anything in a dream.

In her sleepy state, and thinking this might not be real, she blurted out something without much thought. "Thank you Sam...you know I've always *loved you*...I just never found the right time to tell you." She said this and drifted off into sleep once more. Sam looked at her friend, wondering if she had heard it right. She must have. Her face started to feel hot. She tried to keep down her blush. She whispered back a response. "I feel the same, Lara...I always have...I deeply, and thoroughly, love *everything* about you." She sort of hoped that Lara didn't hear her. Another part of her hoped that Lara did. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) for her, Lara did. Her whisper had woken her up. She couldn't believe what her friend was saying. Where did they go from here? She laid there for a bit, contemplating *everything* that had happened that night. She closed her eyes and started to feel herself falling to sleep.

However, since she had been through so much she couldn't go back to sleep. So, after she saw that Sam had fallen sleep, she slowly tiptoed out of the room. She made her way to the balcony. She took a cigarette and a lighter out of her pocket, and blew a cloud of smoke out of hr mouth. She felt better already. She really *needed* to relax. She wouldn't have that chance, however. She soon heard a nearby whirring and whooshing sound. She looked out and saw her: a woman with deep and rich brown skin. Her black hair had blonde highlights and she had a metal nose ring going through both nostrils. Her dark purple lipstick shined under the moonlight. Sometimes, this woman's skin had a creamy color with red undertones. Other times it radiated from within, as she glowed like the sun, overflowing with warmth and luminosity.

The woman hovered in air while wearing a custom-built jetpack of some kind. Those things *actually existed?* "Oh, Lara, Lara...I can't believe you could be so foolish, to defend a colonialist, racist institution like the British Museum. Perhaps you really haven't changed from *your father.*" Hearing this, she almost reached for a weapon, but remembered she didn't have her gun on her. She had put it inside. She gnashed her teeth. "Who are you?" she demanded. The woman became even more incensed. She wanted to stick it to Lara even more. How could she not know? What had happened to her? How had she forgotten *so much*?

"I'm Penelope Stone," she said with a straight face. Lara put it together. She made the connection. Something clicked in her mind. It all made sense now. She gasped. She looked so different. Was it really her? It couldn't be, right? She had to make sure. "Penny...is...that you?...I thought you were dead! I thought someone had murdered you! I looked for you after we lost touch...but I could never find you...I searched and searched everywhere I could think of...I almost lost my mind." Although the now-villainess was relieved to hear her say this, it didn't erase all the pain she'd caused. She couldn't get over it that easily. She gritted her teeth.

"Well, Lara, it's *Penelope* now. I don't use that other name *anymore*...as for you, the so-called 'ex-heiress' of the *great* Croft family, you are going to get what's coming to you...your little game is going to come crashing down...no matter how much you deny it, I *know* you are with Sam Nishimura...I know you are a couple." She paused. "Why did you choose *her*...instead of *me*?" She said this with pain radiating through her voice. She felt so betrayed and let down. Lara tried to comprehend what in the world was happening. She attempted to be apologetic. She wasn't the best with this kind of thing. She tried her hardest. "I didn't mean to hurt you...if I could only go back..." she started to say. The woman snarled. She couldn't stand this damn Brit.

"You *can't* do that, Lara. You can't re-do the past like Jay Gatsby...that *isn't real*...you know, he got murdered by some fucking auto mechanic in the end...Anyway, I'll make you feel the pain that I've suffered with for so many years, pain I've had all because of *you*." She moved closer to Lara and pecked her on the cheek. She did at such a quick speed that Lara couldn't stop her. She snickered, then she began backing away. Lara's face had turned completely red.

"Don't worry, Missy...that's just the *kiss of death,* of misfortune...that is what you British swine deserve...you'll be seeing me around...*love you*!" she shouted as she jetted away into the night sky. She disappeared like a flash, like she's never been there at all. Lara couldn't say anything in response. She fell to the ground with her back leaning against the concrete wall behind her. She tried to piece it all together. Her school friend was alive? She was a villain who wanted to take her down who had...kissed her? She didn't know how to feel about her or how she *should* feel. She got up and had another smoke. She put out her cigarette and went back inside. She'd deal with it in the morning…

The next day she was awoken by her black haired friend softly touching her brown hair. She opened her eyes. Her friend was staring right at her. Unlike the previous night, her friend *didn't back away*. "Lara...it's time to get up..." She stared lovingly into her friend's brown eyes. "Okay, Sam," she said sleepily. They laid there side by side, stroking each other's hair for little while, enjoying one another's company. Before long, they were sitting next to one another at a small breakfast bistro table. They chowed down on bagels and drank tea that Lara had brought with her. You really couldn't trust continental breakfasts at *places like this*. There was so much packaged food. She had her own routine.

"I still can't believe you like cinnamon sugar and drink tea. I thought you'd be eating a jalapeno pepper every morning and be drinking black coffee." Lara couldn't stop laughing. Sam had a wrong

impression about her. She looked at her friend with a smirk on her face. She put her hand on her left leg. "It's just what I'm used to. I don't even know all those Japanese and Portuguese foods you like..." Their happy bliss was interrupted by a text message from Zip. Lara was still recovering from the fight with that woman the previous day just like Sam. His message was direct. She could tell he was concerned. "LC, you gotta turn on your TV. Something's going down in Cairo. It's on *every* news channel."

She moved over to the bed and grabbed the TV remote, pressing a red button to turn on the black flatscreen in front of her. She then put in her earpiece. She activated it by pressing a blue button on the side. Using the remote, she went through the channels and clicked on BBC News. She liked it better than terrible American corporate media. Despite that, she hated that they'd started making their broadcasts transphobic by describing trans people in a degrading way, and were generally imperialist. Perhaps they were better than the trashy tabloids, but not much better *at this point*. Too many bigoted, awful people, were in the U.K. It made her sad to think about it.

The chyron at the bottom of the screen blared out a message, telling viewers about the latest news story: "BREAKING NEWS: Rosetta Stone 'Returned' to Egypt." She hoped this wasn't what she believed it would be. The announcer, clearly annoyed and not liking this news, almost spoke about it with a tone of derision in his voice: "We are here today in Cairo. A press conference at the Supreme Council of Antiquities is about to begin. Our government sources tell us that there will be an announcement about the 'return' of a key historical artifact that was reported stolen from the British Museum last night." He then informed viewers that the press conference was beginning.

Cameras of international news agencies were on standby to broadcast the press conference across the world. The Egyptian government had invited them. "Thank you all for coming today," a nicely dressed Egyptian man, dressed in a black suit and tie, said. "I'm Ahmed al-Adani, Egypt's minister of tourism and antiquities. Last night we received a broken rock slab in the main hall of the Supreme Council of Antiquities from Miss Sandiego. Its authenticity has been verified by experts, including Professor Argent, who flew in this morning from the University of Montreal. She specializes in ancient artifacts. This rock slab is none other than the Rosetta Stone. We are more than overjoyed to have it back in Egypt, where it truly belongs, not in a stodgy museum *in London*. We have been calling for the repatriation of this stele for years, for the return of this icon of our country's identity. It is a part of *our* cultural heritage. It's ours, not theirs."

He turned toward one of the women standing on his right side. "I'd like to introduce Miss Carmen Sandiego, CEO of Black Sheep Incorporated. She has extended a generous deal to us. She has put her thieving days behind her and has fully dedicated herself to helping countries, like ours, to recover our artifacts. She helps catch criminals before they sell precious history on the black market to the highest bidder."

The young woman stepped forward. She wore a striking red sparkling dress, cut at the leg, showing off her slender body, and her beauty. It was similar to the one she's worn that time to a certain gala, but also different. Her wavy maroon-red hair was down to her hip, with her bangs parted at the side. She stared toward the camera. Her prominent eyelashes stood out. They were eyelashes you could get lost in, if you *weren't careful*. Despite how small they were, her face was accentuated by them, as was her trademark red lipstick. Lara and Sam looked at her almost in awe. They wished they had looks like her and could pull it off this easily.

"Thank you, Mr. al-Adani. I'd like to announce that Black Sheep Incorporated is willing to pay the full cost for state-of-the-art security to protect this priceless piece of history. For too long, artifacts have been taken by colonizers and not returned to where they truly belong. The British Museum is

one of the worst offenders. Without their stolen artifacts, the museum would be *nothing*. It would be a dead letter. We cannot sit by and wait years for people to sign official documents. These artifacts need to be returned *now*. The Rosetta Stone belongs with the people. It does not deserve to be in some insecure, haughty museum."

She took a deep breath. She was about to say something even bolder. She knew that her words would make some people angry. So what. "We must take *direct action* to ensure that objects of international, and cultural, significance, return to their original homes. Museums in London, Paris, Berlin, New York City, and elsewhere, can sneer all they want, and claim that they are serving citizens of the world. They are not. Truth be told, all they want is one thing: to *profit from theft*. We can't let them. I am happy to announce that we are taking immediate legal action, starting with the British Museum, to force that museum to return their stolen artifacts. We can't wait around for promises and weak-willed action. The time is now for *decisive action*. As an Argentinean and a Mexican, I've seen this happen to my home countries, and how museums drag their feet. I'm not about to let it happen *again*."

People clapped and cheered. They agreed with every word. Carmen had a few more words to say. "I'd like to introduce the one who gave me the assignment to retrieve this *stolen* artifact. Everyone please put your hands together for Miss Penelope Stone. She has been dedicated to this even longer than I have." Coming up to the podium while wearing a nicely tailored longline bright emerald ladies jacket, Penelope looked different. This wasn't like her usual outfit. This classic, and embroidered, silk jacket was very popular. It was designed to be worn open. She wore it with trousers of the same color. She'd designed it to have pockets while keeping small vents on the sides. She felt incredible.

"Thank you, Miss Sandiego. Renowned Egyptologist John Ray once said that a time would come that the Rosetta Stone has spent more time in the wretched, overcrowded British Museum than in the wonderful Nile Delta port city of Rosetta, called Rashid in Ancient Greek. We can't wait for that time to come. We can't let *rogue actors* like Lara Croft, with her newfangled Croft Center for History and Culture, fool us. Let us all remember, regardless of her claims, she still remains the heiress of the massive Croft family fortune, a fortune which grew thanks to her notorious father who stole artifacts for *his own pleasure*. She *can never be trusted*. She's something despicable we all should abhor: a *tomb raider.* There are some people you *can* trust. You *can* trust Miss Sandiego, Black Sheep Incorporated, and Penelope Industries, a company I've headed for years with my associates. I can assure you that. It is my golden guarantee."

The crowd became boisterous. They were cries from the assembled Egyptians, many of whom raised their fists into the air. "Down with the British scoundrels! Repatriation not theft! *Our* heritage matters!" This was *exactly* what Penelope had hoped for. She had known that that anger at the British remained fresh. People felt bitter that their culture had been taken away. She tapped into those feelings. The press conference continued, but Lara had heard enough. She wanted to punch the TV screen, but Sam held her back. How could Penelope describe her that way? Who did she think she was?

"Lara, calm down, please...don't hurt yourself...not after what happened yesterday." Her friend looked at her. She was almost about to cry as she firmly held her friend's hand. She pressed a button on the remote. The TV turned off, becoming a dark black screen once more. Just feeling Sam's hand caused her anger to dissipate. It felt soft and warm. "I'm sorry...I just…" She couldn't hold it anymore. She started to cry. Her friend held her close as tears streamed down her cheek. For a while, they remained in a close embrace. Soon her tears subsided. They looked at each other. Sam was very worried about her.

"Is there something you'd like to talk about?" Lara nodded. "I can't stand that woman...she *defamed me*! And...if that wasn't bad enough, I was her close friend at boarding school when she was named *Penny*...we lost touch...I tried to find her for a while. I thought she was *gone*." She said something that was certain to create misunderstandings. But she couldn't hold back. "All I know is that she *hates* me... she said as much when she came by here last night."

That set off alarm bells in Sam's head. She'd come by? How? When? She needed to know more. She pulled Lara close and growled. "*Explain*. What you mean she was here last night?" This was certain to be a mess. She really didn't want her and Sam to drift apart *again*. "I was gonna tell you before watching that *fucking clown show* on TV. I was smoking out on the terrace…" Her friend judged her intently with discerning eyes. She threw up her hands. "I *know* it's bad for me. I *know*! I know I shouldn't do it anymore. Yesterday was so stressful. She came by here wearing a jetpack. She looked so different... she told me that my 'little game' was going to end. Sam, she *knew* that you were with me."

She stared back at Sam, with a forlorn look on her face. She couldn't let this destroy what they had. "I tried to apologize, saying I didn't want to hurt her. She didn't care. She was so fucking stubborn! She's in a lot of...emotional and psychological pain... then she had the gall to *kiss me on the cheek*! I don't know what the fuck that was about! She claimed it was the kiss of death... I don't know about that because she said she loved me then she jetted away? I'm so pissed off! Gah!" Sam was trying to take it all in. This woman had declared she'd get her revenge on Lara... and *kissed* her? What the hell! She couldn't stand for this. *Something* had to be done.

"Don't worry, Lara, we'll get through it. Just trust me on this." She had to get back at that woman. She whipped out her phone and opened one of her favorite social media apps, Face Smasher. She'd created an account to showcase her photography. Over the years, she had been far too embarrassed to post *anything* of Lara. She wanted to keep those photos as part of her own private collection. She had been grateful that Lara had retrieved her camera from that sadistic woman, Mila. She didn't go on Face Smasher that much. She usually just checked accounts of celebrities and renowned photographers. She had encouraged Lara to create her own account too. Her friend had begrudgingly agreed, but she rarely ever posted on there, and mostly posted weird photos which made no sense.

"Can you do one thing for me?" she asked her brown-haired friend. Lara looked at her dumbfounded. What was she getting at? Did she want to walk around London or something? She'd be okay with that. "Can you kiss me?" Lara had *never* expected that question. She started to blush. What did Sam want her to do? Was she toying with her? Was she being serious? "I-I-I can...only if you want to," Lara said cautiously. Sam nodded. She had one final request, raising her hand like she was in school. Lara rolled her eyes. What now? "It can't be on the cheek. It has to be *on the lips*."

Lara pouted. "Okay...here I go." She moved in slowly, inching closer, until she reached her friends lips. She closed her eyes. Her lips sloppily touched Sam's. Placing her hand on the back of Lara's head, she moved her even closer, causing in even deeper, crimson blush. She held her phone above them both, and *somehow* snapped a photo. She had gotten good at this after taking selfies hundreds of times with friends. Their lips remained locked together for longer than either of them expected, even after Sam withdrew her hand from the back of Lara's head. They had wanted to do this for so long. Finally they had a chance.

Fanart by Lena (using the username lonelybealone) showing Lara and Sam kissing, originally [posted on Tumblr](#) in late December 2025 and added here with permission.

After a while, it had been enough. They both breathed deeply, while remaining close, as they sat next to one another. What now? "I guess we are *girlfriends* now?" Lara said, clearly curious of her friend's answer. Her friend smiled. "Yeah, that's right." With a devious smile, she turned to her now-girlfriend. She wanted to make that dastardly ex-friend jealous. She wanted to get back at her. "Why don't we post our kiss on social media?" Sam was surprised. She was about to propose *the same thing.* That was why she'd opened the Face Smasher app after all, right? She never imagined

that Lara would propose it first. "Are you absolutely sure? It might make people think about you *differently*." Lara nodded. She had been used to these kinds of probing questions. This might make it harder for her. She didn't care. Penelope *had to pay*. "Yeah, it's fine. *Do it*."

She opened the app again. She went to the photo feature, went through the filters, added alt-text ("Me intensely kissing my girlfriend") and wrote a caption: "Kissing my girlfriend @lady.croft.ex.heiress in London. Hope you all had a great National Girlfriend Day yesterday. I know I did!" She completed her post by adding the tags: #loveislove, #mynewgirlfriend, #twobadassesinlove, #comingout, and #sapphiclove, along with a bunch of others she thought up. She clicked a blue button. The photo made it's way into interwebs. The British tabloid papers, which closely monitored the social media accounts of both women for any activity, soon posted articles. Celebrity magazines and a panoply of queer publications soon followed up with their own stories.

On social media, some people snarled, calling Lara a "liar." Others celebrated, saying they "always knew" that the two women would get together. Penelope, in her mountain ice fortress near the North Pole, saw the news. She slammed her fist down on the table. She couldn't believe that Lara had done this. Why hadn't the theft of the Rosetta Stone stopped her? Why weren't people rallying against her? Why was the media lapping this up? Fucking jerks, *all of them*, she thought. She hated this. She growled. "If it's the last thing I do, I'm gonna take you down, *Lara Croft*, and your damn girl too...just you wait."

End Notes

This fic is slightly inspired by Tumblr posts here, here, here,here, and here. This fic also pulls from the fandom pages for Lara, Sam, Fig, Eva Tong, and Camilla Roth on the Tomb Raider fandom site, plus the Carmen Sandiego (2019 character) page on the Carmen Sandiego fandom site, and the "Requests for repatriation to Egypt" section of the Rosetta Stone Wikipedia page. According to some YouTube video clips I found here, here, here, here, and here you can see windows reflected in the glass around the Rosetta Stone. I've never actually seen the Rosetta Stone myself (only the replica elsewhere in the museum), so I imagined what it might be like.

At first I thought the color code for Penelope's skin is #9f4d28 (GIMP tells you the color code, so that's how I found it), which one site I found says is a shade which is "primarily a dark and moderately saturated representation of Rich Browns Deep Sensual…predominantly red with a value of 62.4%. This is complemented by 30.2% green. Blue is the least dominant color at 15.7%. Additionally, Rich Browns Deep Sensual are deep and rich shades of brown, conveying a sense of sensuality and depth." However, I used the color picker elsewhere on Penelope's face and got color code #843922 which the same site called "a dark and moderately saturated representation of Rich Browns Deep Sensual," with some similar results here. I also thought Penelope had mahogany skin. I wasn't sure about umber, tawny, ochre, sepia, teak, or burnished listed by jaethebookworm in a posting. I was going to go with "bronze," which is listed here here, rather than mahogany, as reinforced by this page, but I couldn't find which one exactly, even when looking through pages like this (a slight inspiration by the way) so I kept it a bit ambiguous. If someone else can figure it out, please let me know!

Thanks to the posts of screenshots, by tombraidingalchemist on Tumblr, from the most recent season, with ones particularly here, here, here, and here, as they were a clear inspiration for this fic. The kiss between Lara and Sam in the text is a little like this screenshot edit.

This fic was originally cross-posted on Sunset. On Apr. 17, the Sunset admin, Agnes, perma-banned me for mishandling interactions certain users *even after* I apologized to said users and removed certain passages of two fics. As such, I would **strongly** recommend against *anyone* joining that site, or Superlove. Both admins (Melo/Kat for Superlove, Agnes) are friends w/ each other. Those admins are very particular in a bad way. I find the whole circumstance deeply unfortunate.

Works inspired by this one

Lara, Carmen, and the Spiky Black Leather Collar by lefemmerouge

'Handling' Lara Croft by lefemmerougensfw

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!